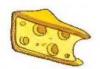




Geronimo Stilton











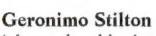








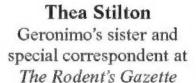








A learned and brainy mouse; editor of The Rodent's Gazette



















Trap Stilton An awful joker; Geronimo's cousin and owner of the store

Cheap Junk for Less

Benjamin Stilton A sweet and loving nine-year-old mouse; Geronimo's favorite nephew

















Geronimo Stilton

THE PHANTOM BANDIT



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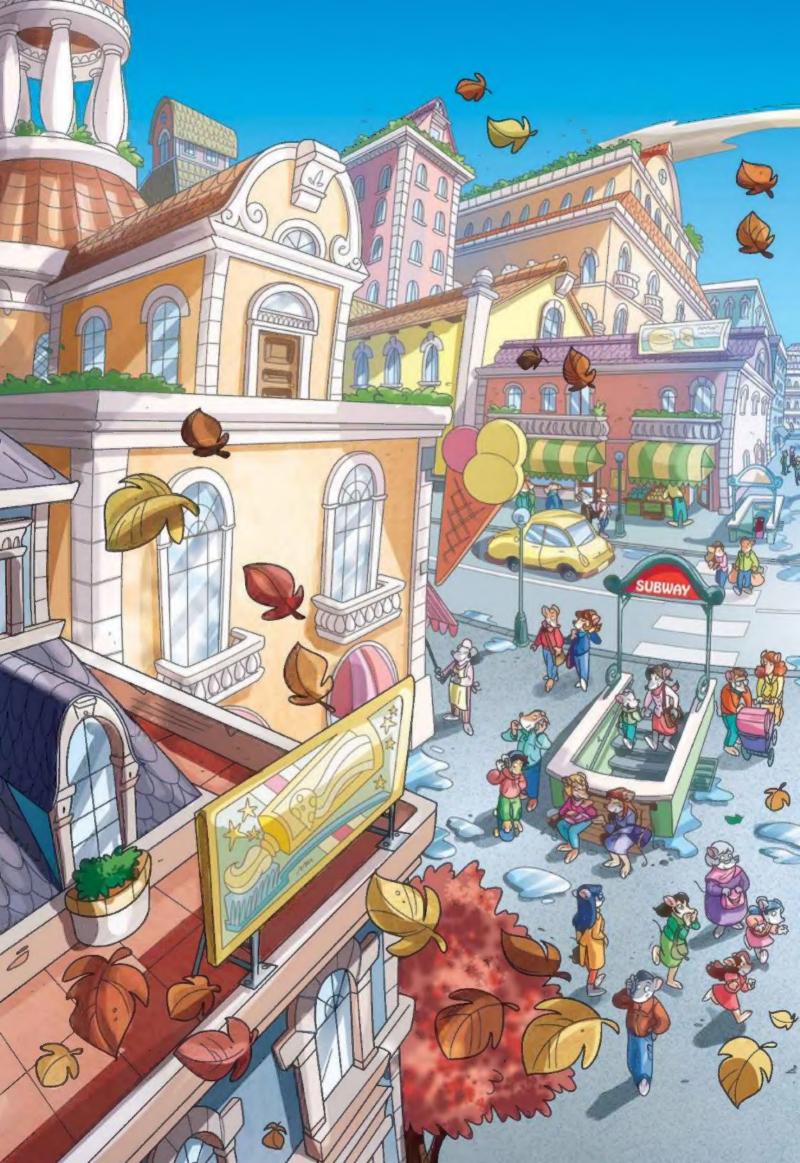
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It was a beautiful FALL morning. It had just stopped which and my whiskers twitched at the smell of damp leaves mixed with the scent of freshly baked cheese pastries wafting from the café. I breathed in the cool, fresh air as I pedaled toward my office.







As I was saying, my dear rodent friends, I was really enjoying the **BEAUTIFUL** autumn air. I couldn't wait for the weekend. I planned to invite all my **friends** to the Stilton **farm**, out in the country. There, we could pick **CHESTNUTS** and **Toast** them around a fire.

HOW I LOVE FALL!

The leaves are so colurful, and it's the best season to eat grilled cheese!





When I reached 17 Swiss Cheese Center, I parked my biblie in front. On the way to my office, I passed by the break room. There, MUNCHING on cheese, I saw Vanessa Vogue (the Gazette's fashion journalist); my sister, Thea; (the Gazette's special correspondent); and Cara DeColores (the graphic designer for the Gazette).

They were all whispering mysteriously,

"PSSST ... DID YOU HEAR?"

"P\$\$\$\$T ... everyone will be there ...
P\$\$\$\$T ... it will be scary, scream-worthy,
a real frightfest!"



I interrupted them. "Hello, everyone!" I said. "What exactly are you saying is going to be SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening?"

The three rodents looked **startled** to see me.

"Why, um, we were just talking about a new article idea I just had," Vanessa answered. "About the, um, frightening new fashions in Transylmousea."

"That sounds mousetastic!" I said. "Good luck with the article!"

They all quickly stood up.

"Thanks, Geronimo!" Thea said. "But, um, it's late and we need to get back to work!"

Then they ran off, and I was confused. Why were they in such a rush?

WHAT A STRANGE ENCOUNTER!

pssst ...

Huh?

Psst.

On the second floor, I spotted my assistant, Mousella, chatting with reporter Babs Bonbon.

"P\$\$\$\$T," she said in a loud whisper. "Everyone will be there . . . P\$\$\$\$T . . . it will be

scary, scream-worthy, a real frightfest!"

I interrupted them, too. "Excuse me, but what is going to be SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening?"

"Um, we were just talking about the new horror film, "Mousella explained. "Sorry, we have to get back to work!" Then they both scurried away.

ANOTHER STRANGE ENGOUNTER!

I ran into Jim Dribbles (the Gazette's

expert Soccer commentator) who was whispering with his sister Gloria.

"P\$\$\$\$T," Jim whispered. "Everyone will be there. P\$\$\$\$T... it will be scary, scream-worthy, and a real frightfest!"

"Excuse me, friends," I asked. "Can you PLEASE tell me what is going to be scary, scream-worthy, and frightening?"

Jim's eyes got wide, and he pointed. "That piece of flying cheese right behind you!" "What? I would asked." I asked.



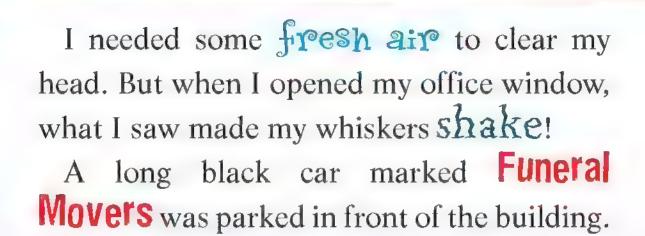
Confused, I turned my head, but there was nothing behind me! When I turned back, Jim and Gloria were **running** away, giggling.

"GERONIMO HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DISTRACTED!" Jim was saying to his sister. "The Secret has been protected! And it was will be truly SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening!"

How strange, I tried to follow them, but they were in much better shape than I was and I couldn't catch up.

THAT WAS MY THIRD STRANGE ENGOUNTER IN A ROW!

Jim had used the word secret. Now it was clear that my coworkers were hiding something from me. But what could it be?



Some rodents dressed in black were unloading **coffin-shaped** boxes.

THIS WAS THE STRANGEST ENCOUNTER OF THEM ALL!



I quickly ran downstairs to see what they were up to. As I passed by the cafeteria, my nose twitched. The smell of goodness wafted through the doors. But who was cooking so early?

HOW STRANGE!

I started to push open the doors, but a **furry** paw pushed me back.

"Geronimo, why are you being so nosy?"



"feeeeeek!" I squeaked.

Then I realized that it was just my cousin Trap.

"Don't call me nosy!"
I snapped. "Strange things are happening around here, and I am the Only Only who doesn't know what's going on!"

I tried to look past him, but he kept moving his body, BLDCKING my view. Then he started to tease me by singing a silly song.

"Geroni-mini is a curious Ninny! Geroni-mad is a curious ! Geroni-mule is a curious FOOL!"









A Stress-Free Vacation!

I left Trap and ran outside to try to find out what the **Sloomy** movers were doing. But there was no sign of them, or the **Coffin-shaped** boxes.

All of the mysterious happenings at The Rodent's Gazette were making me uneasy. I headed back home and saw that my DOOR was slightly open!

Oh no!

Was there a thief inside?

With trembling paws, I opened the door.

Inside my living room sat my sister, Thea; Mousita Middleton, who works at the newspaper; and my friend CREEPELLA VON CRACKLEFUR. They were whispering to one another.

"If ... let's get rid of him for a while," Thea was saying.

WHAT A STRANGE SCENE!



"I cried. "How did you all get in here? I almost FAINTED with fright!"

"Calm down," Thea said. "I used the spare key you gave me."

"We just came to check on you, Gerrykins," Creepella said. "Trap told us you were acting STRANGE."

"I'm not the one acting STRANGE!" I protested. "It's everyone else! Why is everyone

I'm not acting strange!

being mysterious? Everyone is whispering! And talking about scary things! And who were those Funeral Movers I saw?"

Exhausted, I plopped down on my chair.

Creepella patted my head. "Poor Gerrykins. You're very **Stressed!**"

Mousita jumped up. "I'll make you some tea!"



Creepella whispered in my ear. "You need a little stress-free vacation, Gerrykins."

"Hmm," I said. "A stress-free vacation sounds nice."

She clapped her paws together. "Perfect!" she cried. "You can come with me to Cacklefur Castle!"

Cacklefur Castle? There was nothing relaxing about that Spooling place!

"Well, actually, I can't . . ." I started to protest, but Creepella was already shouting into her phone.

"Geronimo Stilton will be coming with me to the Cast Prepare the best room for him, she said. "Prepare the best room for him, Boneham! Yes, Geronimo, that sweet little SCAREDY-RAT who has a big chush on me."

"Well, actually, I don't have a cr —" I



grabbed are and was leading me outside.

Mousita gave me a **thermos** of tea, and Thea shoved a pre-packed suitease into my paw.

As I climbed into the car, I could swear I heard Thea whisper, "It will be SCARY, scream-worthy, and a real frightfest!"

NOT AGAIN! HOW STRANGE!

But before I could ask her any questions, Creepella's Turbotomb **Special** away.





I Am Not a Jealous Mouse!

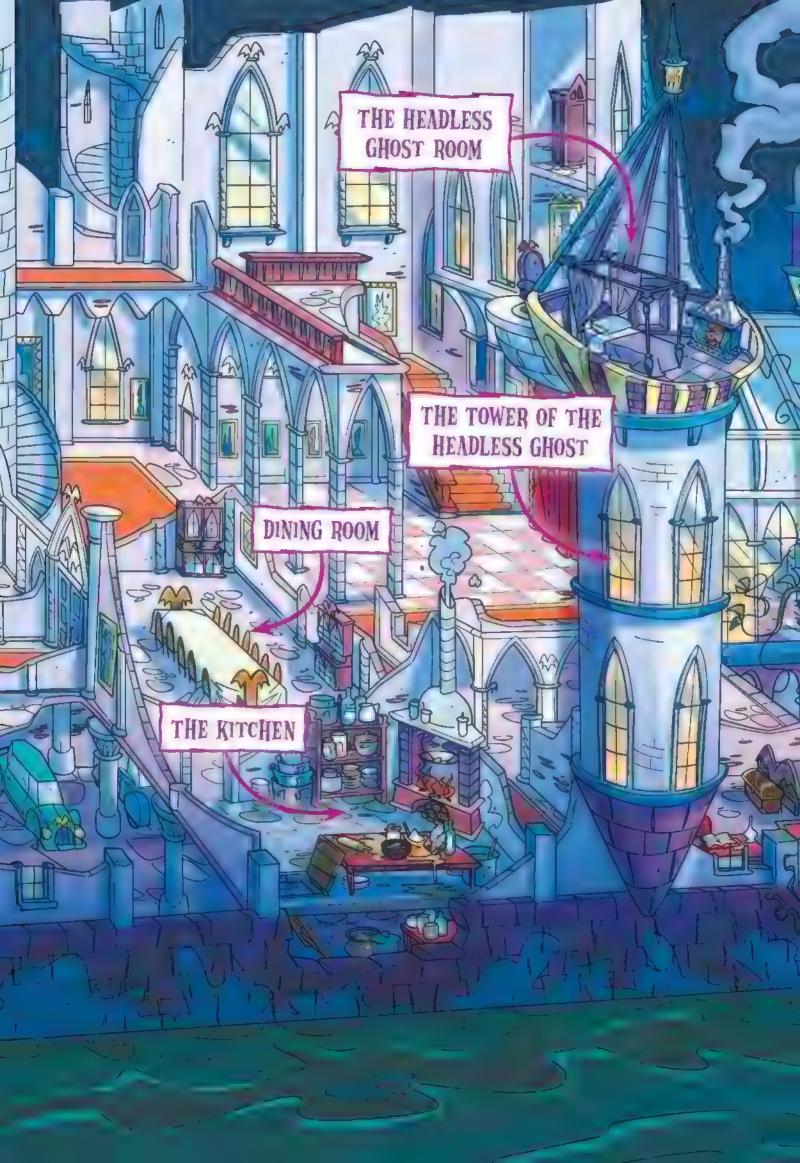
We arrived at **Cacklefur Castle** at the stroke of midnight —

the witching hour!

I had seen the castle many times before, but it still gave me **chills** whenever I saw it. It stood upon a **skull-shaped** hill, and its **TALL** spires extended into the **dark** sky.

To make things even creepier, a terrible STORM had broken out just as we got there. Lightning bolts flashed, boomed, and an eerie wind whistled through the spooky trees.









THE VON CACKLEFUR FAMILY















Thanks!



When I got out of the car I was greeted by the castle's butler, Boneham.

"Welcome, Mr. Geronimo," he said. Then he lowered his voice to a whisper. "Of all Nelcome!

the guests tonight, you are the nicest."

I was Summer July I didn't know there would be other rodents on my stress-free vacation.

"Um, what **quests**?" I asked.

Then I noticed a rodent bending over the moat, collecting drops of line in a test tube. It was the famouse professor AVIII TESTERY. who had just won the Rodel Prize in Science!

He walked over to Creepella and KISSed her paw. "You are truly enchanting, my dear host," he said. "Thank you for letting me study the the in your moat. It will come in handy to my research on ghostly superviruses."

Creepella smiled. "I am happy to do my part to advance science!" she replied.



Then I heard Boneham whisper in my ear, "Please don't be jealous, Mr. Geronimo. Lady Creepella only has EYES for you!" "JEALOUS? WHO, ME?" I asked. "NO, I'M JUST A LITTLE BIT HUNGRY."

Creepella overheard me.

"Hungry? Then why don't you and I have a midnight snack of Chef Stewrat's tew, Gerrykins?"

The thought of that terrible stew made my whiskers twitch. Before I could refuse, a luxury sports car pulled up next to the Turbotomb.

A tall rodent in an elegant suit and **PUPPIC** bow tie stepped out of the car. It was the famouse **FILM**OR, Gaspar Ghostine!

I knew that Gaspar had won a Mouscar award for **Best Spooky Film** for his movie **The Muenster Under the Bed**. He had brought Creepella a big bouquet of purple roses. "For you, my dear," he said. "Thank you for allowing me to film my next movie, The Gorgonzola biost, at your castle."

"How thoughtful!" Creepella exclaimed.

"Boneham, please put these in a nice vase."



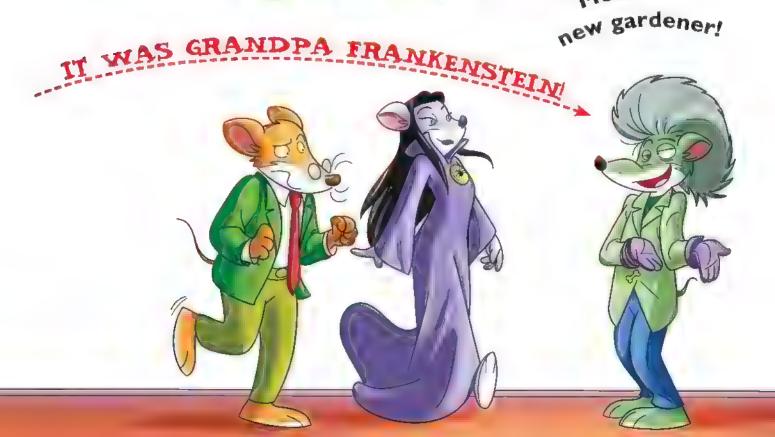
"All those roses! What a show-off!" I snorted.

"Please don't be jealous, Mr. Geronimo," Boneham repeated. "Lady Creepella only has EYES for you."

"JEALOUS? WHO, ME?" I replied. "NO, I'M JUST A LITTLE BIT GOLD."

Creepella took my paw. "Let's go inside, Gerrykins. We can sit by the fire and warm up."

We entered the castle, where we ran into a rodent with **green fur**...



Creepella's grandfather was chatting with a muscular rodent wearing a gardener's apron and ROUMD sunglasses. His green shirt had a pattern of colorful flowers, and his pants were stained with dirt.

"Meet the new GARDENER, Felix Bloomfur," Grandpa said. "He will manage our greenhouse of Carrivorous plants."

Felix turned to greet us and STARED at Creepella, his face as red as a tomato. "C-C-Creepella von Cacklefur? Is th-th-



that really you?" he asked. "You look even more enchanting than you do in pictures. I c-c-can't believe I'm actually MEETING you!"

"can I have your phone number? What are you doing tonight? Are you dating anyone?"

She pulled a purple notebook out of her bag. "Why don't you give me your phone number, and I'll add it to the **GUEST** book," she said politely. "That way I can call you one day (or maybe not)."

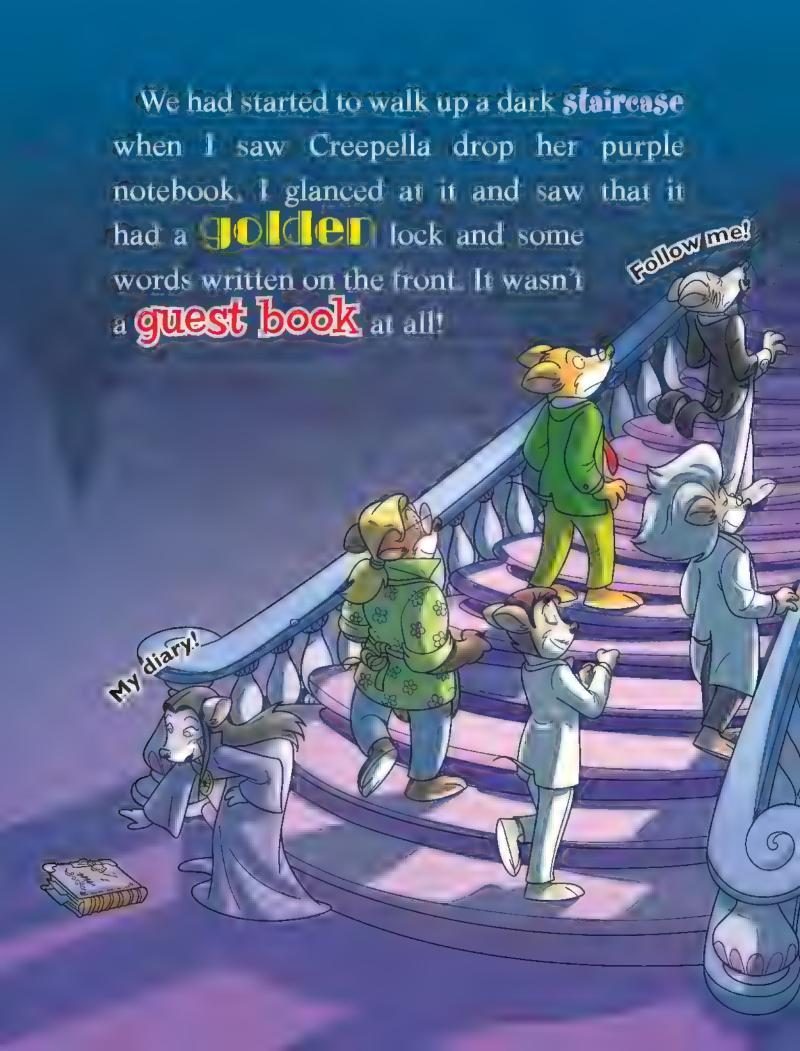
HUMPH!" I snorted How rude of Felix to ask for her phone number like that!

Grandpa Frankenstein worked at me Don't be jealous. Geronimo he said.

replied.

Why don't you rest a little before we call. Gerrykins?" Creepella asked.

Then Boneham appear the butler said will take you to your room."



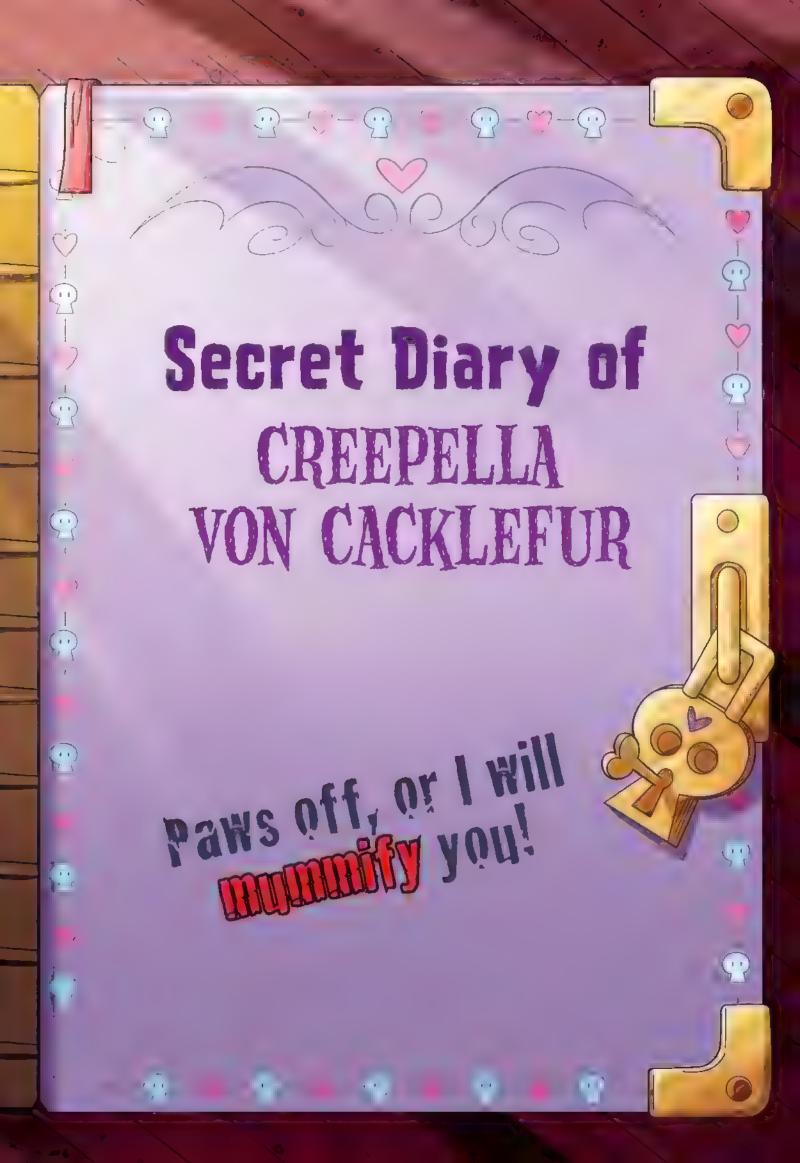
It was her secret diary!

She saw me looking at it and she smiled.

"I keep track of my ADMIRERS in here, and all the gifts they give me so I can send them thank-you notes," she said. "You can LOOK at it, but don't be jealous."

"I AM NOT A JEALOUS MOUSE!" I insisted.











THE ROOM OF THE HEADLESS GHOST

Boneham stopped at the top of the stairs.

"Mr. Geronimo, this is your room," he said. "The Room of the Headless Ghost. It is the scariest, most frightening room in the entire castle! I hope you are pleased."

"Th-th-thanks," I stammered. But I wasn't pleased. I was terrified.

The door opened with a creak. Creeeaaak!

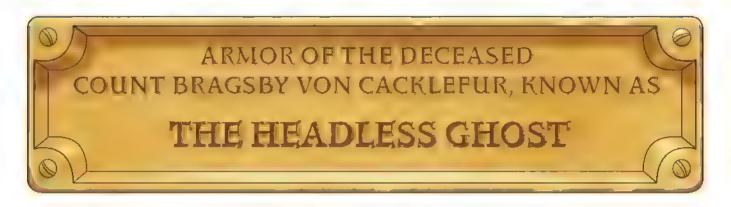
l let out a scared squeak. Squeeeaaak!

Then I stepped inside. Eeeeeeek!



Purple satin covered the walls, which made the room look very . In the center was a long canopy bed with purple sheets, and bats carved into the tops of the posts.

Flames danced in the marble fireplace, projecting long, eerie **SHADOWS** on the walls. They lit up a plaque on an old suit of armor.



Suddenly, the suit of armor moved! I jumped back. The arm lifted and took off the helmet. I let out a terrified shriek. "Eeeeeeeeek!"

"Do not be afraid,
Geronimo!" a ghostly voice
said. "I, the Readless
blost, will watch over
you as you sleep."

"Um, th-th-thanks," I stammered. "Although I do not think I will get any Sleep in this room!"

I had been in many spooky rooms in the castle before, and I SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO THIS.

I decided to walk around before our latenight dinner. I knew I would run into more gnosts, monsters, and creatures, but I had to get away from that HEADLESS HORROR!

My whiskers twitched nervously as I



walked quickly through the castle's DARK



hallways. I had a creepy feeling that I was being watched.

The **portraits** of the Cacklefur ancestors were following me with

their eyes. What a fright! I had seen them before, so I SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO THEM.

Then another good appeared out of thin air. It was the Poltergeist!



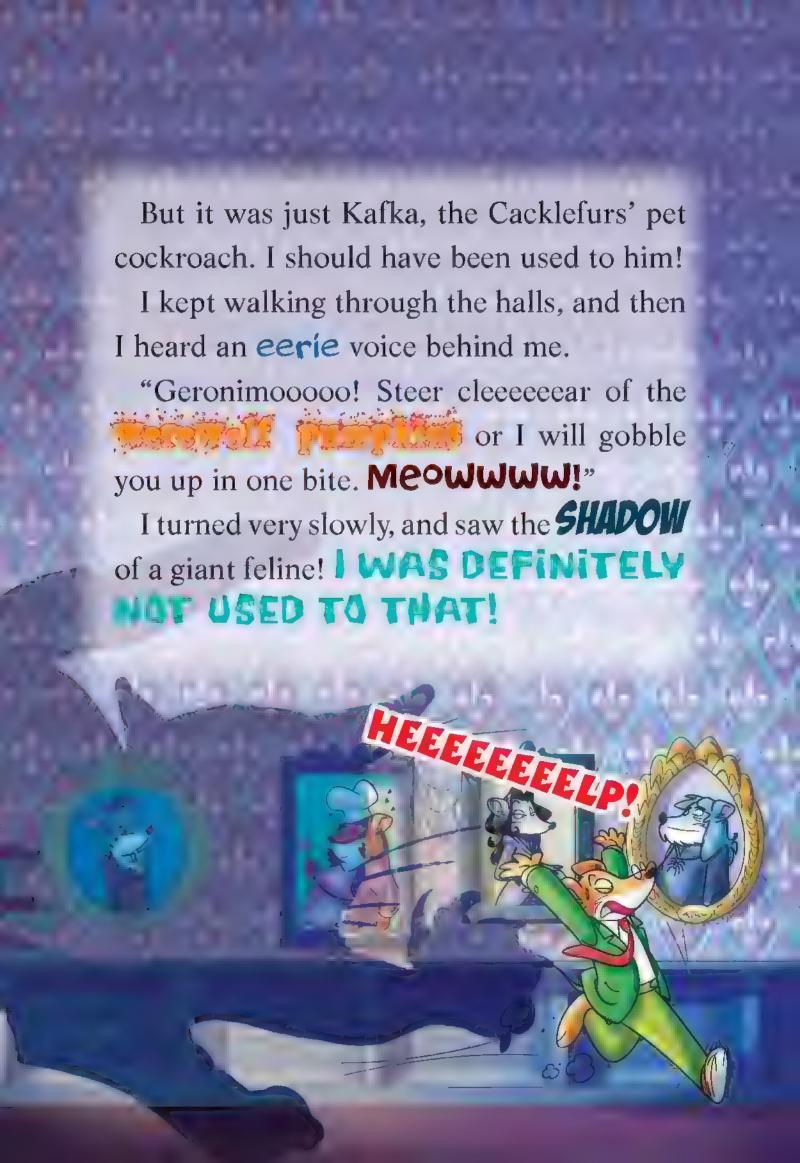
I knew Booey, and I should have been used to him, but I still squeaked in fright!



I heard a loud noise, and I nearly jumped out of my fur. Then I realized it was just Boneham banging the gong for dinner. I should have been used to that, but my nerves were on edge!

I kept walking, and something skittered across my foot. **Feek!**







I screamed at the top of my rodent lungs!

"Heeeeelp!" I wailed as I **ran** all the way to the dining room. Most of the other guests were already seated.

"Gerrykins, what's wrong?" Creepella asked.

"Don't tell me you're still afraid of this castle," said Boris von Cacklefur, Creepella's dad. "YOU SHOULD BE USED TO IT BY NOW!"

"I have never seen a Col phonon before," I replied. "How could I be used to it?"

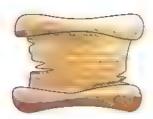
Creepella gasped. "A Cal Challon? Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure!" I yelled.

"It was terrifying! Horrifying!

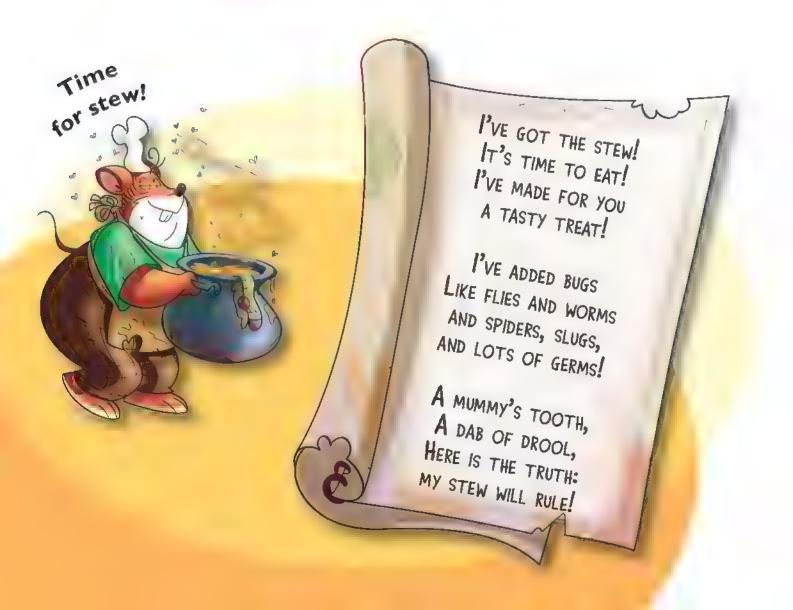
Eeeeeek!"

And then I fainted!



THE LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS

A hit my nostrils and woke me up. I opened my eyes to see CHEF STEWRAT carrying a heavy CAULDRON and singing . . .





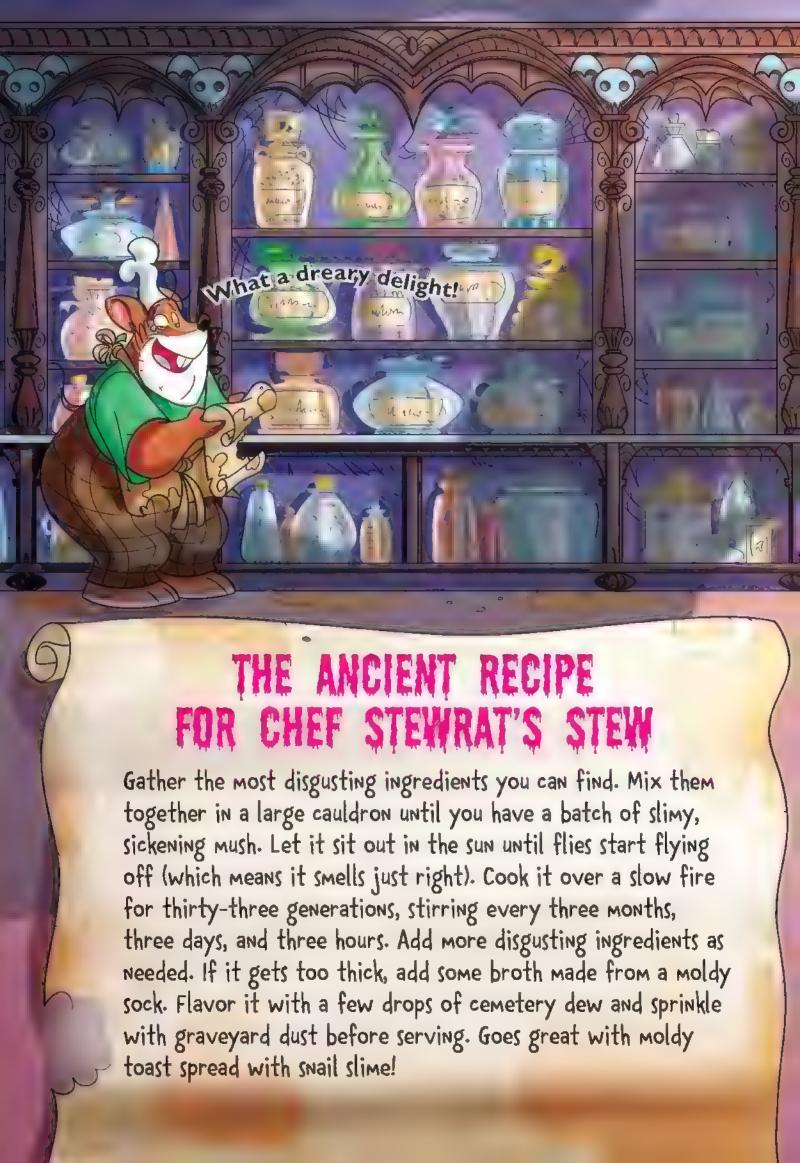
I almost fainted again, but Creepella fanned me with a napkin until I stopped feeling so dizzy.

"Gerrykins, do the ingredients of the stew still turn your stomach? YOU SHOULD BE USED TO iT!" she said.

"It looks TERRIFYING," said Gaspar Ghostine with a pleased grin. "I should make a movie about it. Night of the Living Stew!"

At that moment, Felix Bloomfur came running in. "Sorry I'm late. I took a little nap." He sniffed the air. "What is that **DELICIOUS** smell?"

"It is the Cacklefur family stew," Chef Stewrat replied proudly. "It has been boiling in the same **CAULDRON** for thirty-three generations! Geronimo, have the first helping!"



The thought of eating that horrible stew made me sob. "Enough!" I cried. "I don't want to eat the stew! I don't want to sleep in a room with a Padless 91056! And I don't want to be gobbled up by a little was supposed to be a stress-free vacation, but it's not!"

"I am absolutely, pawsitively sure," I replied. "It was an ENORMOUSE shadow with cat ears. It even meowed! And then it told me to stay away from the were wolf purpling."

The members of the CACKLEFUR family looked at one another.

"Gerrykins, you won't believe this, but

there happens to be an ancient family legend about wortholf pumpling and Cat Pirates," Creepella said.

"Wh-wh-what?" I stammered. "What do cat pirates have to do with this?"

"I'll be Right Back," Creepella promised, and she returned a moment later

Here's the legend!

"The **LEGEND** of the cat pirates is very old," she explained. "It dates back to the Middle

holding an antique scroll.







The Legend of the WereWolf Pumpkins

During the first great invasion of cat pirates, hordes of dangerous felines invaded all of Mouse Island.

When the cat pirates tried to invade Cacklefur Castle, they could not get past the pumpkin patch—because it was not an ordinary pumpkin patch. The pumpkins were werewolf pumpkins, and when the cat pirates attacked, they fought back.

They wrapped their tendrils around the cats, trapping them. They gnashed at the cats with their sharp teeth. Frightened, the cat pirates fled, and the castle was spared, but many werewolf pumpkins were smashed on that sad night.

The Cacklefurs have never forgotten the heroic acts of the werewolf pumpkins. They planted more pumpkins and kept the garden lovingly tended. And every year, they celebrate the werewolf pumpkins on Halloween Night.

Alvin Testerly stroked his whites.

"Very interesting," he said. "I would like to examine the **dirt** in the garden to see if there are any mutant Viruses that make the pumpkins so big, and so full of Bire."

"Fabumouse!" explained Gaspar Ghostine.

"Maybe it will INSPIRE my next film!"

Boris nodded. "Excellent. Let us visit the garden after dinner."

"Just don't forget about my DELICIOUS dessert," added Chef Stewrat.







THE WEREWOLF PUMPKIN GARDEN!

It was almost dawn when we walked to the Wefowolf Fumpkin Curden.

To get there, we had to pass through the Cacklefur family **Cemetery**.

As we walked among the **sloomy** tombstones, my whiskers trembled in



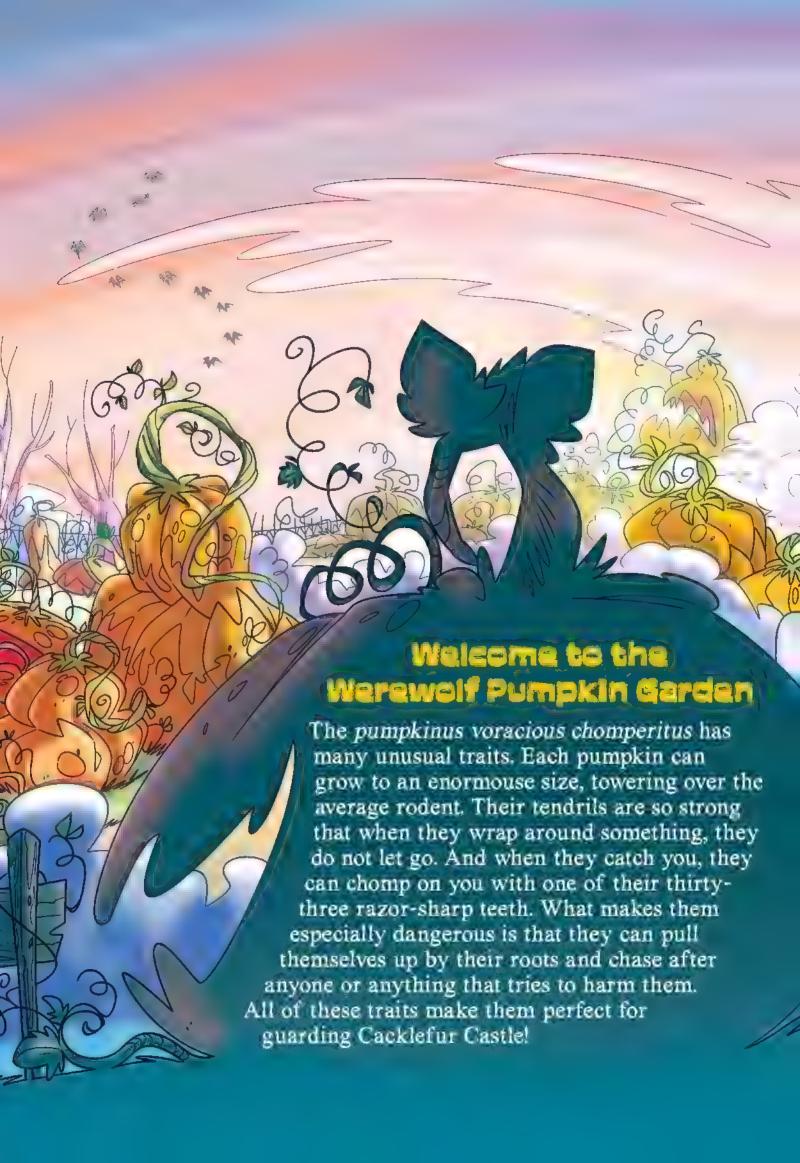
Boris laughed. "The pumpkins rather like the tombstones. They keep one another company. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the **SCIENTIFIC** classification of the pumpkins?" asked Felix Bloomfur.

"They are an interesting and lare species," Boris replied. "Pumpkinus voracious chomperitus."







"I believe I have heard of the *pumpkinus* voracious chomperitus," Felix said. "Is it true that they have teeth?"

Boris grinned. "Yes," he replied. "Lots of them!"

We walked up to a tall iron **gate** that opened into a garden filled with **HIGE** pumpkins. They were all bigger than we were. It was an **The State** sight!

"It's a shame such big pumpkins only grow here," Felix remarked. "Have you ever thought about Selling them?"

"Of course not!" Creepella replied. "These pumpkins are special. They saved the Cacklefur family. We will never sell them!"

"Besides, they are too dangerous," Boris added. "Ordinary gardeners would not know how to control them."

Creepella opened the gate.

"Stay back!" she warned us. "The pumpkins will BITE anyone who isn't a Cacklefur."

She approached one of the pumpkins and **hugged** it. "It's all right, my treasure. Nobody here will harm you."

She turned to us. "The pumpkins are very intelligent. They can using a special alphabet."



FGHIJKLMNOPQRS

The Special Alphabet and Numbers of the werewolf Pumphins























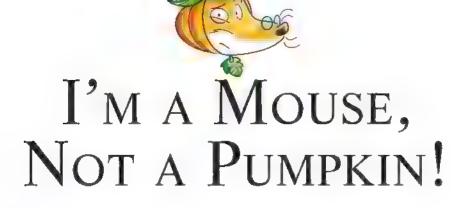


JKLMNO PQ FSTUV

TUVWX9ZABCDEF



wxyzAbcclefGhii



The sum had already risen when we returned to the castle.

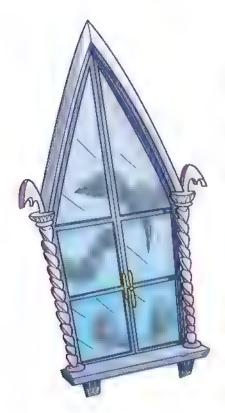
"I'm dead tired," Creepella announced.



"Everyone to bed, and gloomy dreams to all!"

I returned to my room and was so fired that I didn't care how spooky it was. I pulled the covers over me and tried to sleep.

But I couldn't sleep! First of all,



Then some Crows landed outside my window and began to caw.

CAAAW!

CAAAW!

Finally, my eyes drooped.

I fell into a **DEEP SLEEP** and began to snore even louder than the Headless Ghost.

I wasn't asleep for long when another sound woke me up. CREEEEEAK!

Someone had opened my door!

"WIN-WIN-WHO'S THERE?" I

stammered, but no one answered.

Then I heard footsteps walking toward my bed. Tap, tap, tap!

Mr. Geronimooooooo!"

I curled up into a terrified ball. Squeeeak!



Then I heard a GHOSTLY voice whisper, "Pssst! Mr. Geronimooo!"

Frozen in fright, I watched as a tall moved across the curtains of the bed.

"HEEEELP!" I yelled. "It's the Cat Phantom!"

"Nonsense, Mr. Geronimo," the shadow said. "It is I, Boneham. The sun is setting. Time to wake up!"

I groaned. This stunk worse than the



cheese! "But I only just fell asleep!" I moaned. "I want to go back to bed!"

"MISS CREEPELLA is waiting for you, and it is not a good idea to make her **Wait** too long. Now eat your breakfast."

Boneham set a tray of **DISGUSTING** breakfast food before me. Stew tea, fresh-squeezed stew juice, a yogurt-and-stew smoothie, and a croissant filled with stew.





I skipped breakfast and I went to see Creepella, yawning.

"Wake Up, Gerrykins!" Creepella said cheerfully. "I have a hunch about the "I have a hunch about

7-7-7-7-7-7

"Waaaaaake uuuup!" Creepella yelled.

My eyes flew open. "I'm awake. Full of pep and energy! Yawn . . ."

She handed me an costume. "Put this on," she insisted.

It was a werewelf pumplin costume!

"I can't go around looking like this!" I protested. "I'M A MOUSE, NOT A PUMPKIN!"

"There are three reasons you need to wear this," Creepella said.



The werewolf pumpkins will think you are one of them and won't bite you.



The Cat Phantom will think you are a pumpkin, not a mouse.



You will look totally adorable!

"You want me to wait for the last to show up?" I asked as I put on the costume, terrified.

"Yes," Creepella replied. "I even got you a pumpkin tent so you will be comfortable on your stakeout. Good luck, Gerrykins!"

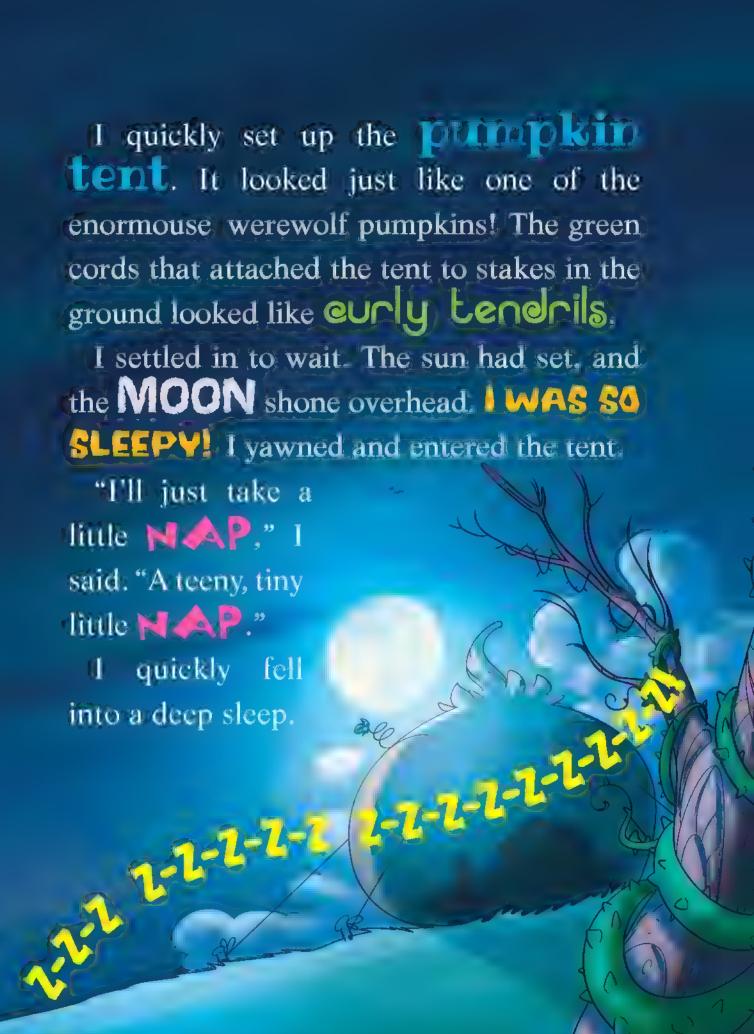




My whiskers trembled in fright as I tiptoed into the garden. The werewolf pumpkins didn't try to bite me.

GREAT GORGONZOLA, WAS I NAPPY TO BE WEARING THAT SILLY GOSTUME!





I **snored** and **snored** late into the night. Then a noise startled me.

BOOOIIIING! BOOOIIIING!

Someone (or something?) had tripped over the cords of the pumpkin tent! Ijumped out of the tent.

"Who's there?" I squeaked.

Shaking like a tub of cottage cheese, and with my fur standing on end, I peeked out of the tent. The moon lit up the night sky, as round and pole as a ball of mozzarella.

Then I saw it. The shadow of a large cat, swiftly moving through the garden.



The had tripped on the strings of the pumpkin tent! And now he had me and was coming toward me!

I quickly rolled up into a ball and tried to hide among the werewolf pumpkins.



I held my breath, hoping that the would think I was just another pumpkin. I watched as the cat SHADOW came closer and closer. He stopped and LOOKED around. But he didn't find me!

Great Gouda, was I happy to be wearing Creepella's pumpkin contume!

Then I realized something. The Cat Phantom was holding a big pair of pruning shears in his paws — those big scissors used by gardeners. I could see them sparkling in the moonlight.

Creepella was right! That Cat Phantom was going to cut the stalks of the werewolf pumpkins and Steal them!

What could I do?



They attacked the Cat Phantom and bit his tail! He let out a loud.





I gasped.

CATS DAN'T SAY "SQUEAK"! AND GHASTS DAN'T YELL "AUCH"!

Was this the little really a cat? Was it really a phantom? Whatever he was. the ran out of the partients the Weberroll pumpking horgestalone after form.



You're safe.



I slowly approached the pumpkins. Luckily, none of them had been hurt.

1. I gently patted them. "It's all right. You're safe now," I said. They moved their leaves to answer

me with the pumpkin alphabet. "Thanks, Geronimo."

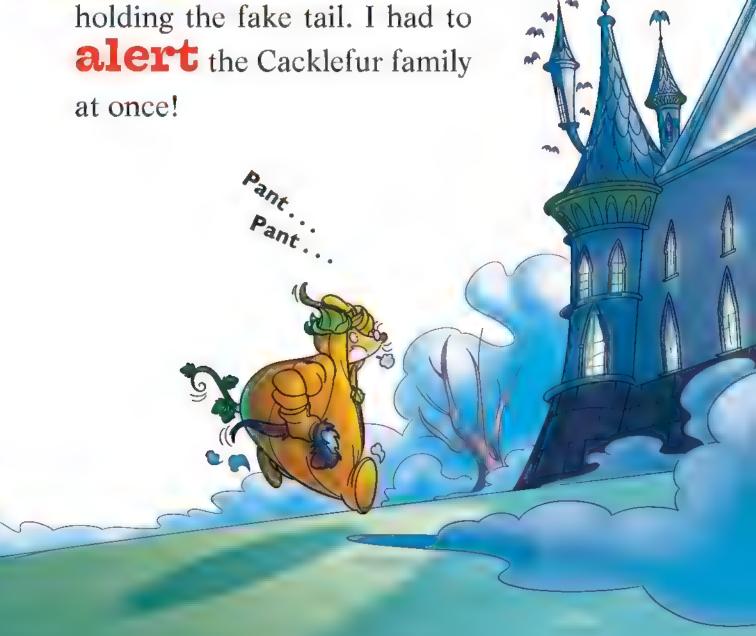
2. Then I spotted something on the ground. That something

was a furry
fake cat tail! It
had a BITE
from one of
the werewolf
pumpkins!





3. Holey cheese, it was a CLUE! This was proof that the thief was neither a land nor a land of the castle,





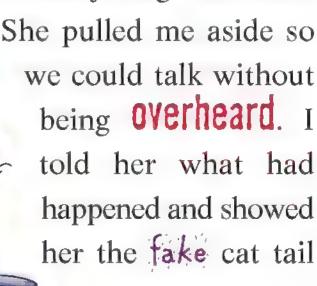
When I reached the castle, Boneham was banging the gong to call everyone to midnight dinner.

G00000000NG!

"Creepella!" I yelled.

She ran up to me. "Gerrykins, what is it?

Tell me everything," she said.



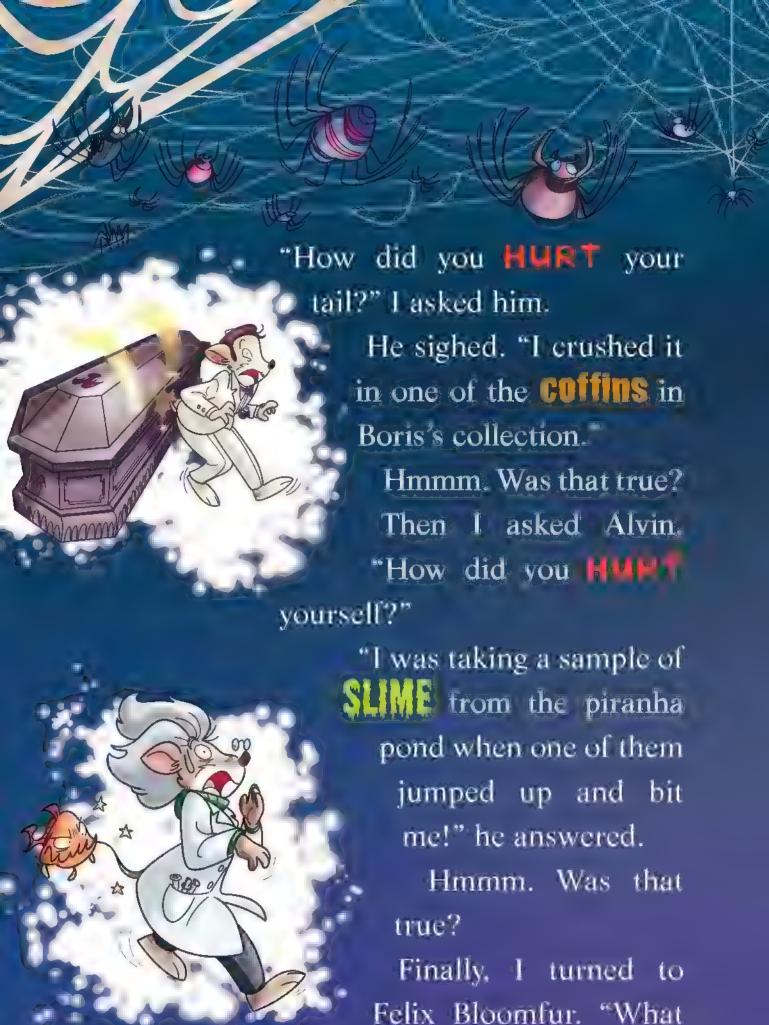
with the biffe taken out of it.

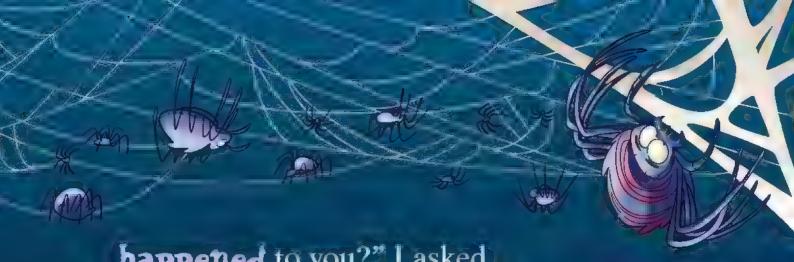
"This proves that the Cal Phanton isn't real," I said. "It is probably one of the quieste."

"You're right," Creepella agreed. "But which one? You won't believe this, but all three guests showed up to dinner with BANDAGED tails Which one of them was bitten by a were wolf pump kins? Let's interrogate them! I suggested

I approached







Ough That huris

happened to you?" I asked.

"Well, I was walking through the greenhouse when I was attacked by some

earnivorous

he replied.

Hmmm. Was that true?

"One of them has to be LVING," I said.

Creepella nodded You're right she said. But I have a thought. Whoever is the bal Flom Off had to quickly take off his COSTUME to get to the dining room in time Maybe the thiel left the PROOF in his room!"

"Brilliant!" I said. "Let's go check the rooms."

We walked up the Tower of the Medless flost and entered Alvin Testerly's room. The floor was tracked with muddy foot prints!

"Does this Prove that Alvin was in the pumpling fitting." I asked.

Creepella shook her head. "Alvin is always in the mud looking for Mutant viruses," she said. "That doesn't mean it was him."

We investigated Gaspar Ghostine's room





next and saw that he had a Willie Globs hanging from the coat rack — just like the one worn by the Coat like the

"Maybe it was Gaspar I saw in the

Creepella sighed. "That doesn't Prove anything for sure. Gaspar is filming a movie here about a gloss." This could be one of his costumes."



Bloomfur room. Right away, we spotted a pair of pruning shears on the floor!

"Look!" I cried. "The Cat Phanton
had a pair just like this!

Creepella shook her head. But Felix is a CARDENER. He always uses pruning shears. It doesn't mean he's guilty!

Moldy mozzarella, this is frustrating! | |



Who could

"You're right," Creepella agreed. "There must be a way to tell the **REAL THIEF** from the other guests."

Then an hit me like a bolt of **lightning**. "Creepella,

HELD," I said. "Write a note to each of your admirers, and ask them to take a MODILICAT walk with you in the garden of the werewolf pumpkins."

She looked confused. "How will this help us **figure out** who the thief is, Gerrykins?"

"You'll see," I promised. "TRUST

So Creepella wrote THREE NOTES, and slipped one under the door of each guest's room.



Then we **ran** to the garden, and Creepella warned the pumpkins, "Don't move until I say so!"

"Why don't you wait here, by the pumplin tent," I suggested, "and I will hide here among the pumpkins. If my plan works, we will find out who the guilty one is!"

We waited. First, Alvin Testerly appeared on the path. He stepped toward Creepella.

"Oh, Creepella! What a **romantic** note you sent," he whispered.

Then . . . • • • ! He TRIPPED on one of the cords of the pumpkin tont and landed right on his snout.

BOOOIIING!

"He isn't the fake phantom," I told Creepella.

Then Gaspar Ghostine came. "Beautiful Creepella!" he

exclaimed. "My heart aches

for you like . . . "

Oot He tripped on a cord and landed right on his snout next to Alvin.

BOOOIIING!

BOOOMING! "He isn't the quilty one,

either," I said. "It can only be one rat!" Felix Bloomfur **ran** into the garden.

B000 Heeeeeelp!

Heeeeelp!



"I'm here, Creepella!" he cried, and he jumped right over the cord of the pumpkin tent — he knew it was there!

I jumped up out of my hiding place between the pumpkins

and pointed to him. "There he is! HE'S
THE FAKE PHANTOM! IT'S
FELIX BLOOMFUR!"

"Werewolf pumpkins, get him!" Creepella commanded.

The pumpkins hopped after him and wrapped their vines around him. Then they showed him their sharp teeth.

NOM, NOM, NOM!

"Galloping ghosts, just admit you did it, Felix!" Creepella said.

"Now please tell the werewolf pumpkins not to bite my tail!"

The truth Creepella insisted



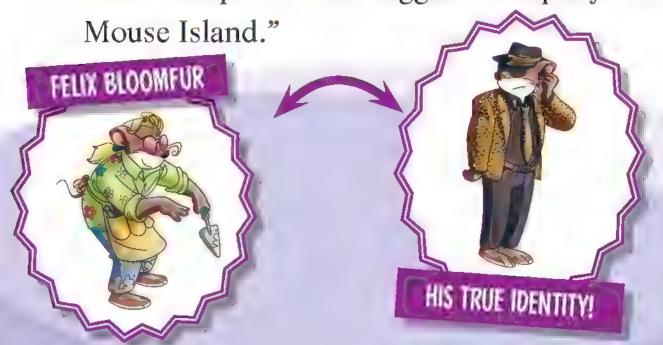


A RODENT IN DISGUISE!

Then **FELIX BLOOMFUR** did something surprising. He took off his blond wig and his mirrored sunglasses. He put on a pair of dark sunglasses. I recognized him right away.

"I remember you! You are one of Madame No's bodyguards!" I cried.

"It's true," he confessed. "I work for Maddime We, the Mega Director of EGO Corp. — the biggest company on



"I am a Plant expert," Felix continued.

"I took the bodyguard job to pay for my plant experiments. When Maddillo learned of my skills, she gave me this mission."

"What exactly does that GREEDY RODENT want?" I asked.

"She knows that *pumpkinus voracious* chomperitus only grows in the Cacklefur **garden**," Felix replied. "Madame No asked

me to them so she could sell them to others for a high price. I got

a costume to scare
you away and keep
you off my trail."

Mudame No is the Mega Director of the EGO: the Enormousely Giant Organization. This powerful company delves into many kinds of business, both honest and shady. Ask her a question, and she has only one answer:

Madame









Felix turned to me. "How did you **KNOW** it was me?"

"The night I slept in the garden, the "I limbour tripped on the cords of the tent," I explained.

"I knew that one of the three guests was guilty, but I didn't know who!

"I made sure each guest had to PASS the tent.

"You didn't trip because you remembered where the cords were, so I knew you had to be the guilty one!"

Creepella hugged me. "Gerrykins, you did it!"

Felix frowned. "What will happen to me?"

"You will go back to Madaine Mo," Creepella said firmly, "and bring her this message: If you cross the Cacklefur family again, you will get your tail bitten!"

Then she clapped her paws and the **Wordwolf pumpkins** released Felix. He fell to his knees.

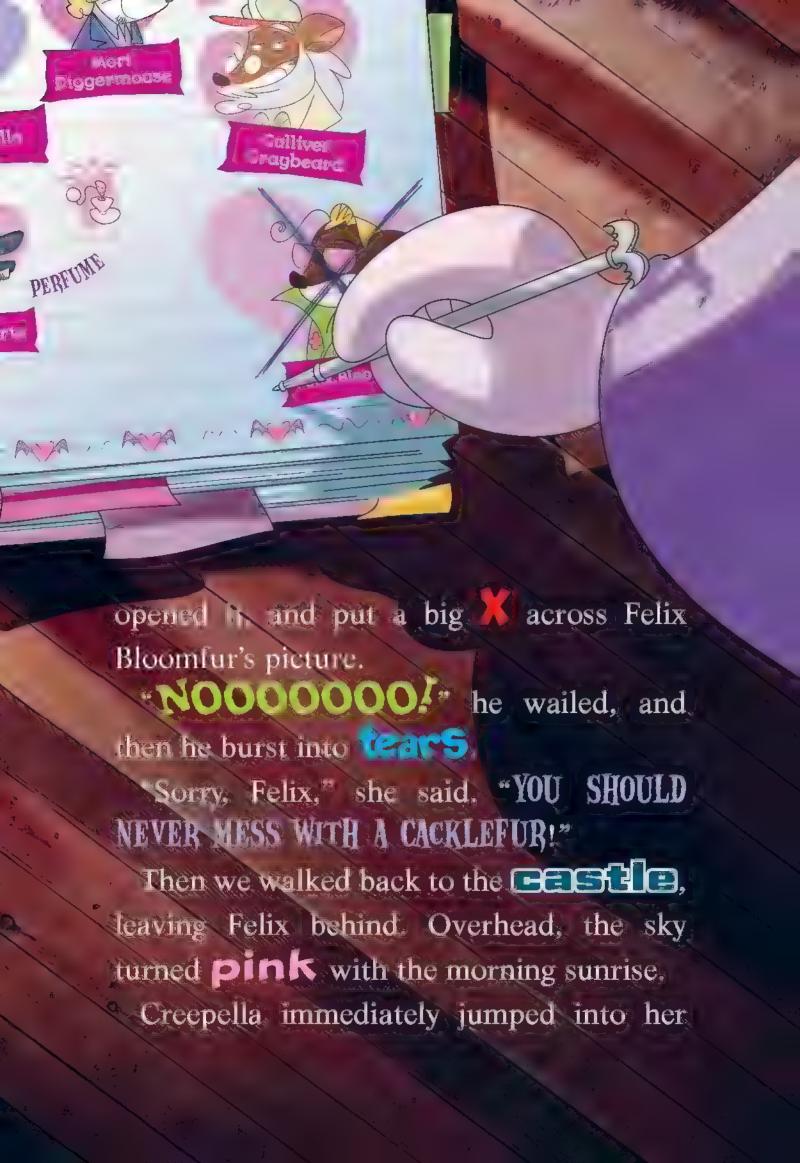
Oh, Creepella!

"Oh, Creepella, I know I Lied, but my feelings for you are real," he said.

"That doesn't matter!"
Creepella cried. "You are
nothing but a liar and a
thief, and you work for
a rodent with a heart more

rotten than the moldiest cheese. You do not deserve to be on my LiST of admirers!"

She took her from her pocket,



Turbotomb. "Hop in, Gerrykins!" she said. "Now we can go back to New Mouse City. There's a surprise for you there."

"Surprise?" I asked.

She nodded. "That's why I brought you here. So you wouldn't find out."

"What kind of surprise?" I asked anxiously.

She smiled. "You'll find out **TONIGHT** at *The Rodent's Gazette*, at **midnight**, sharp!"



HAPPY NIGHT OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS!

Creepella brought me to *The Rodent's*Gazette at **midnight** on the dot.

New Mouse City was Spocky at night!
I opened the door to the office . . . and saw
a room full of MONSTERS!









"HEEEEELP!" I yelled, and then I fainted.

When I came to, Benjamin was fanning me with the hem of his 900st costume.

"It's okay, Uncle G," he said. "We surprised you! We put together a HALLOWEEN PARTY right here at The Rodent's Gazette! It was Creepella's idea. Do you like it?"

"Y-y-yes," I stammered. I couldn't believe all the **effort** everyone had put into the party!



There was coffin-shaped furniture, which must be what those strange rodents in BLACK had delivered. All kinds of Halloween-themed food covered a very long table. That must have been what TRAP was preparing in the kitchen that he didn't want me to see.

The result was truly mous



But the **best thing** was that my friends, family, and coworkers were there. Creepella's family came, and so did her admirers!

She introduced them to me, one by one. "Geronimo, you already know Alvin and Gaspar," she began. "But here is Baron von Slick, Byron Novello, Count Sylvania . . . "

My head began to spin. how many admirers did she have?

Luckily, Thea and Mousita pulled me away. "Ger, there's a Halloween costume for you, too," Thea said. "A werewolf pumpkin costume!"

"Enough!" I protested. "I'M A MOUSE, NOT A PUMPKIN!"

"But, Geronimo, we made it especially for you," Mousita said.

"CREEPELLA suggested it," Thea said. "She





said you make an adorable pumpkin."

I sighed and put on the costume. After all, it was **Halloween!**

Then I heard Creepella's voice. "Thrills and chills, let's get this party started!" she said. "It will be scary, scream-worthy, a real frightfest!"



"HOORAY FOR THE NIGHT OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS!"

everyone cheered.

Then the bandleader announced, "Now it's time for the Candle

Waltz! Who's ready to dance?"



Creepella approached me. "Gerrykins, this is my favorite waltz. Will you dance with me?"

I coughed. "Well, actually, I'm not much of a dancer."

She smiled. "I understand," she said. Then she raised her voice. "Who would like to dance with me?"

All her admirers raised their paws.









"Um, wait!" I said quickly. I can give it a try. It's just one linke Waltz, right."

walked out onto the bare. Three Left per waltzing, Gerrykins!" she said.

I was a little nervous, bull just followed the Soon Creepella and I were Spinning around the dance floor with the other party guests.

"It's so nice to dance with a good friend."
Creepella said with a sigh.

I had to admit, I was having a really good time, even though the room was decorated with spooky stuff. The whole room was filled with laughter and music.



Maybe we will celebrate this day every year!

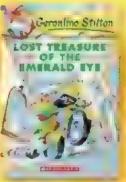
That is
the word
of Stilton,
Geronimo
Stilton



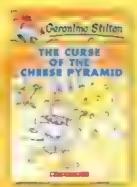
THE NEXT ADVENTURE



Be sure to read all my fabumouse adventures!



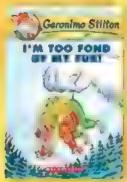
#1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye



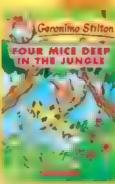
#2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid



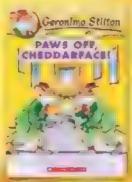
#3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House



#4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!



#5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle



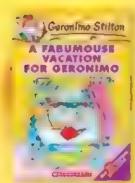
#6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!



#7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count



#8 Attack of the Bandit Cats



#9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Gerenime



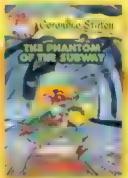
#10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee



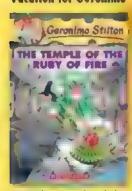
#11 It's Halloween, You 'Fraidy Mouse!



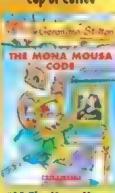
#12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!



#13 The Phantom of the Subway



#14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire



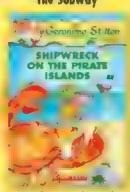
#15 The Mona Mousa Code



#16 A Cheese-Colored
Camper



#17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!



#18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands



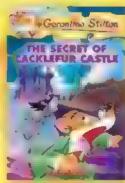
#19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton



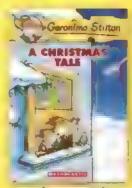
#20 Surf's Up, Geronimo!



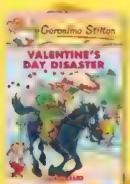
#21 The Wild, Wild West



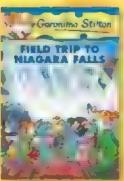
#22 The Secret
of Cacklefur Castle



A Christmas Tale



#23 Valentine's Day Disaster



#24 field Trip to Niagara Falls



#25 The Search for Sunken Treasure



#26 The Mummy with No Name



#27 The Christmas Toy Factory



#28 Wedding Crasher



#29 Down and Out Down Under



#30 The Mouse Island Marethon



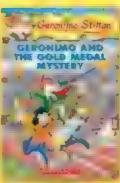
#31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief



Christmas Catastrophe



#32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons



#33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery



#34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent



#35 A Very Merry Christmas



#36 Geronimo's Valentine



#37 The Race Across America



#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure



#39 Singing Sensation



#40 The Karale Mouse



#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro



#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



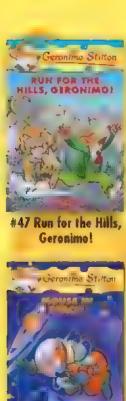
#44 The Giant
Diamond Robbery



#45 Save the White Whale!



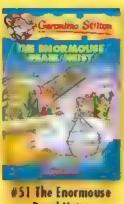
#46 The Haunted
Castle













THE WAY OF THE

Pearl Heist



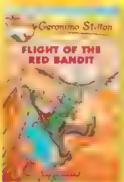
#52 Mouse in Space!



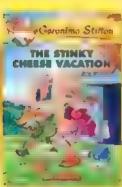
#53 Rumble in #54 Gel into Geor, the Jungle Stilton!



#55 The Golden Statue Plot



#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



#57 The Stinky Cheese Vacation



#58 The Super **Chef Contest**



#59 Welcome to **Moldy Manor**



#60 The Treasure of Easter Island



#61 Mouse House Hunter



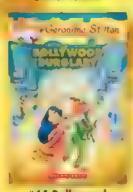
#62 Mouse Overboard!



#63 The Cheese Experiment



#64 Magical Mission



#65 Bollywood Burglary



#66 Operation: Secret Recipe



#67 The Chacolate (hase



#68 Cyber-Thief Showdown



#69 Hug a Tree, Geronimo



#70 The Phantom Bandit



Don't miss
any of my
adventures in
the Kingdom of
Fantasy!



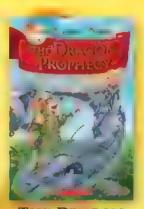
THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



THE QUEST FOR PARADISE:
THE RETURN TO THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



VOYAGE:
THE THIRD ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM



THE DRAGON
PROPHECY:
THE FOURTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE VOLCANO
OF FIRE:
THE FIFTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



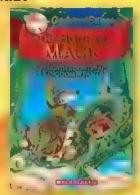
THE SEARCH
FOR TREASURE:
THE SIXTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE ENCHANTED
CHARMS:
THE SEVENTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE PHOENEX
OF DESTINY:
AN EPIC KINGDOM OF
EANTASY ADVENTURE



THE HOUR OF MAGIC:
THE EIGHTH ADVENTURE IN THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



THE WIZARD'S
WAND:
THE NINTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE SHIP OF SECRETS: THE TENTH ADVENTURE IN THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



THE DRAGON
OF FORTUNE:
AN EPIC KINGDOM OF
FANTASY ADVENTURE



THE GUARDIAN
OF THE REALM:
THE ELEVENTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



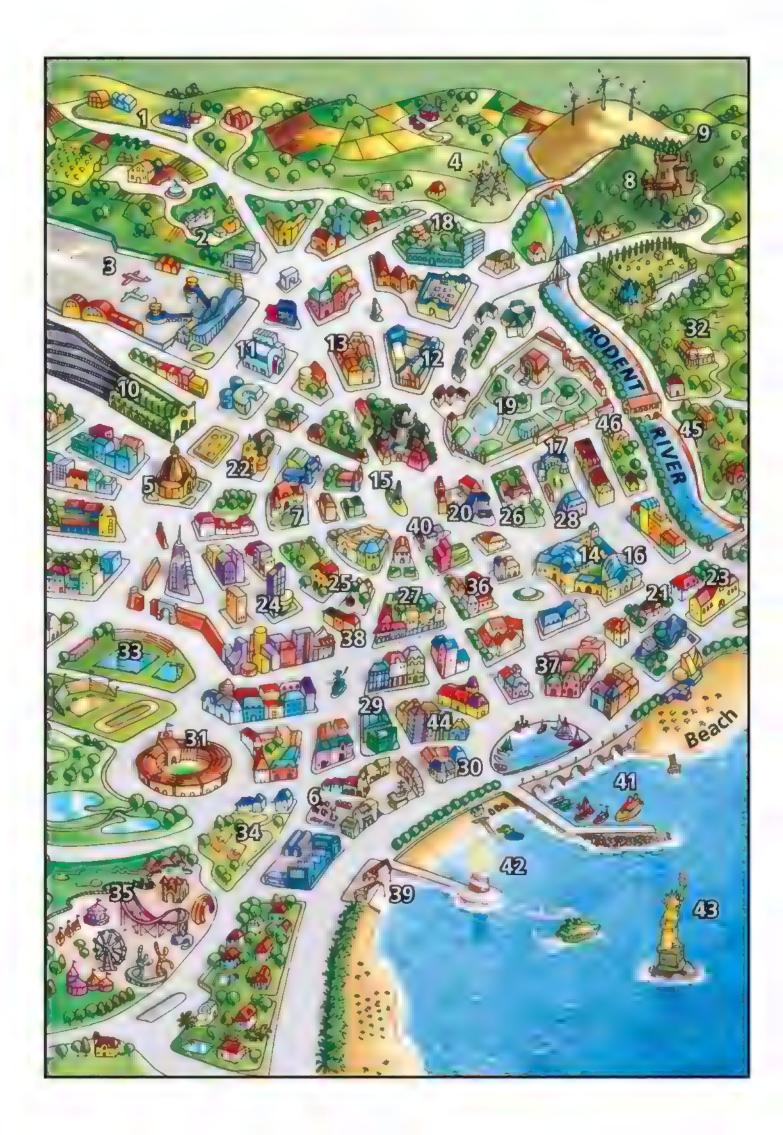
Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, GERONIMO STILTON is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been

running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.





Map of New Mouse City

1.	Industrial Zone	24.	The Daily Rat	
2.	Cheese Factories	25.	The Rodent's Gazette	
3.	Angorat International	26.	Trap's House	
	Airport	27.	Fashion District	
4.	WRAT Radio and	28.	The Mouse House	
	Television Station		Restaurant	
5.	Cheese Market	29.	Environmental	
6.	Fish Market		Protection Center	
7.	Town Hall	30.	Harbor Office	
8.	Snotnose Castle	31.	Mousidon Square	
9.	The Seven Hills of		Garden	
	Mouse Island	32.	Golf Course	
10.	Mouse Central Station	33.	Swimming Pool	
11.	Trade Center	34.	Tennis Courts	
12.	Movie Theater	35.	Curlyfur Island	
13.	Gym		Amousement Park	
14.	Catnegie Hall	36.	Geronimo's House	
15.	Singing Stone Plaza	37.	Historic District	
16.	The Gouda Theater	38.	Public Library	
17.	Grand Hotel	39.	Shipyard	
18.	Mouse General Hospital	40.	Thea's House	
19.	Botanical Gardens	41.	New Mouse Harbor	
20.	Cheap Junk for Less	42.	Luna Lighthouse	
	(Trap's store)	43.	The Statue of Liberty	
21.	Aunt Sweetfur and	44.	Hercule Poirat's Office	
	Benjamin's House	45.	Petunia Pretty Paws's	
22.	Mouseum of		House	

Grandfather William's

House

Modern Art

23. University and Library

Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
till the next book.

It'll be another whisker-licking-good
adventure, and that's a promise!



Geronimo Stilton



GERONIMO STILTON



THEA



TRAP



BENJAMIN

Who is Geronimo Stilton?

That's me! I run a newspaper, but my true passion is writing adventure stories. Here in New Mouse City, the capital of Mouse Island, my books are all bestsellers! My stories are funny, fa-mouse-ly funny. They are whisker-licking-good tales, and that's a promise!

THE PHANTOM BANDIT

The staff of *The Rodent's Gazette* sent me on a vacation to Cacklefur Castle. But who could relax in such a spooky place? On my first night there I stumbled on a mystery. A phantom was threatening the special pumpkins that grow in the von Cacklefurs' garden! Could I trick the ghost-thief into revealing its identity?





More leveling information for this book: scholastic.com/readinglevel

scholastic.com/geronimostilton geronimostilton.com